

# THE LAY-MAN'S MAGAZINE.

"THOU SHALT LOVE THE LORD THY GOD WITH ALL THY HEART, WITH ALL THY SOUL, AND WITH ALL THY MIND—AND THY NEIGHBOUR AS THYSELF."

Number 8] MARTINSBURGH, JANUARY 4, 1846. [Volume 1.

## NEW-YEAR'S ADDRESS.

*We spend our years as a tale that is told.*

Awful thought! Man, whose hours are evanescent as the sunbeam, whose years fly rapidly as the morning vapor around the mountain's brow, Man, who when once he enters eternity's unbounded vast, remains forever unchangeably the same, happy or miserable, he spends the short time allotted for preparation, thoughtless and unconcerned. Like the cork along the stream, he glides onward to judgment's irrevocable sentence, careless and heedless, save of the straws that surround him.

The greatest phenomenon that ever presented itself to the eye of observation, is that of an immortal being careless whether the home in which he is to be irreversibly fixed, be Heaven or Hell. Scarce bestowing a thought on futurity, even altho' he is assured, by authority he cannot doubt, that his fate is in his own hands.

Man, thou art this wonderful phenomenon. Miserable in the condition you now suffer, lying under the wrath of an offended God, exposed to everlasting vengeance, doomed to be the companion of devils and damned spirits, except you repent—you seek not to escape from your woe; you strive not to ward off the impending damnation.

God, that Almighty whom by your sins you have offended, has in the abundance of his mercy provided a way of escape for you; Jesus—Jehovah has come down and bled for your salvation; the divine volume of inspired warning calls on you to escape to felicity, invites you to partake those bounteous benefactions which

infinite fulness showers around Heaven; the dispensations of Providence warn you to prepare for the hour of retribution; still ye go, one to his farm, another to his merchandize, inattentive alike to warning or blessing. Think ye this shall be so much longer? Think ye Omnipotence will another year delay?—This day consummates a new season of grace sinned away. Another term of trial gone forever.—Buried in the volume of the past, it returns no more to you, but a faithful registry has it rendered at Heaven's high chancery, of all your thoughts, words and actions, during its flight: Yes, witness will it against you at the tremendous bar before an assembled, a listening universe. It will tell of every sin committed, of every sermon misimproved. It will testify of all your wickedness, all your contempt of God and his word, all your neglect of his sabbaths, all your inattention to the warnings of his Providence;—the whole black catalogue will it bring forth against you, and conscience will be its corroborating aid.

Yes, Conscience, that awful monitor, that viceroy of Jehovah, who stings now so bitterly at times, will then be a curse more terrible than Hell's ten thousand furies; she will tell you of all her warnings, she will point you to the time, when had you but listened to her monition, you would have become a redeemed one. Yes, she will tell you of moments when her voice has whispered 'prepare for death'—she will remind you of the church yard scene, when as you stood leaning over the mouth of some just closing grave, her still small accents have bid you remem-



ber—you also was dust. She will tell of the hour, when sitting beneath the sound of the gospel, you have heard the declaration of your depravity, and the invitation to escape to Jesus, and she has borne testimony with the preacher. All these things will she then call up to your recollection, but it will not be then as it may be now, to save, but it will be for deeper torment; it will be to harrow up your inmost soul, to summon your every perception to be immersed in the most consummate wretchedness.

We spend our years as a tale that is told. The last year—where is it? A few hours since, and it was here; a few months, and we were but commencing it;—and now, 'tis gone forever!!—Son of mortality! Child of dust and ashes! how hast thou improved it?—Hast thou in it secured thy soul's salvation? Another year of thy probation has fled; another year of the forbearance of God has ceased. How knowest thou that yet another will be allowed thee. Death, like the hurricane, sweeps along.—Before him falls the strong as well as the weak; the oak as well as the willow. Look! he is coming; already whistle his precursive blasts. Being of an hour! thou shalt be swept before him, ere another new year arrives—who of you I know not, but some of you must fall, ere the present year shall have folded its weary wing. Yes, some of you shall go to the narrow home, and when the morn of another year dawns, the wind shall whistle mournfully around your grave. Come then prepare.—Now you have an opportunity again to hear the sound of the gospel. Again I invite you to Jesus, the friend of the repenting sinner. I point out to you God the Father to the returning prodigal;—I tell you once more of that renewing spirit which gives comfort and life. Will you chuse Hell?—Shall procrastination, like the mildew, blast your souls' every hope?

What tho' you feel an indisposition to religion, 'tis better to combat that indisposition now, than to drink of the lake eternal. Say not my farm, my farm, my bonds, my merchandize; no more suffer these to engross your soul's first love. Can you carry them away with you?—Will they cheer you in the grave, or deliver you from perdition?—Awake—Awake,—Seest thou not that the light of eternity begins to break around thee? Hark! 'twas the groan of a departing spirit!! thou mayest be next.

There are a thousand ways in which men pass their years as a tale that is told. One gets immersed in business, and so fills every moment of his time with occupancy that he cannot think of religion. To appease conscience, he sometimes says to himself, by and by, after I have amassed so much wealth for each of my children, I will take more leisure and prepare for eternity. Another is idle, but he saunters from amusement to amusement, from gaiety to gaiety, and fondly hopes, when he is old, it will be enough to think of serving GOD. Sirs, tens of thousands are now lost forever, who made to themselves exactly the same promises. Behold yon miserable spirit by the side of Judas—(Judas) He was a man of cares;—so much had he to do that he could not spare a moment for religion. Now how he curses his blindness. 'Tis too late—Yonder is another, the companion of Dives—He thought pleasure the great end of existence. He steeped his senses in sloth, and slumbered away year after year of his probation, till the whole was gone. Now he looks with wistful eye toward the Heavenly mansions, but they are not for the idler.

We spend our years as a tale that is told, notwithstanding all the blessings we experience. Although the author of every benefaction showers around us so abundantly, we forget



the giver, we abuse his good things, to our own injury, and pay him not the tribute due. Within the last year, have not your crops been plentiful—have not your fields blossomed with the harvest, and your granaries almost burst with its fulness; has not your fertile soil teemed with every good the earth can produce? Situated in the midst of a land which seems like a garden walled around, you, above all others, have reason to bless the giver of plenty. Have you blessed him; have you sought by devoting yourselves to his service, to render that thanksgiving which is most acceptable in his sight, or has the last year, like the former ones, passed away like a tale that is told?

Again—Have you not been preserved from dangers of various kinds? The pestilence has walked around you and left you unhurt. You have heard of its ravages in other lands, while you have dwelt secure. Various escapes have you had; In various ways has a kind and watchful Providence preserved you, in the forest and in the field, in the house and by the way. Have you not been preserved from the more dreadful ravages of war? While devastation and death have swept along the shores of Europe, you have been safe. Others have beheld their dwellings in flames, their wealth plundered. The trumpet has disturbed their slumbers, and the rocket has lightened up their midnight air. From all this have you been delivered.

Within the last year Peace has been restored to you. You have been permitted by a gracious Heaven to beat your swords into ploughshares, your spears into pruning hooks. Commerce has revived, and in her train appear all the blessings of prosperity.

For all this what return have you made? Have you given glory to whom glory is due? Have you erected your Ebenezers to the Lord of Hosts, and

offered thereon the sacrifices of the heart? Have you embraced Jesus Christ, and him crucified, as your passport to those regions where an eternity may be spent in praising God for his goodness? Has not the year, with too many of you, passed away like a tale that is told, unheeded, unimproved?

Think you, your Heavenly Father will continue these blessings, to be despised? Think you if you do not turn unto him and seek to glorify him with due remembrance, he will longer vouchsafe his compassion to you? When Israel forgot the Lord, she was punished. Her blessings were taken from her, for a season. Thus may it be with you. You now enjoy much, very much. Compare your state with almost any part of the world, and you will find cause for thankfulness in your superior comfort. The fields of Europe are a waste. Her houses are robed in mourning. Her young men by myriads have fed the vultures. Her old men have been brought to the grave by famine. Battle and war, as in one vast blast, have poured horror all around her. Such thunderbolts of desolation have broken in upon her very vitals, that it seemed almost problematical whether existence could any longer be her portion.—Who was it hurled abroad those clouds of destruction, which so lately flew thundering over the nations?—It was the Lord, Omnipotent, and he did it that man should not spend his years as a tale that is told. When his judgments are abroad in the earth, men learn righteousness.—

Have you profited by the judgments of the past year? You have experienced judgments also. Why? because you have sinned against God your Maker. For your sins he departed from you, in a degree, and he will depart from you still more, except ye repent and turn unto him.—Every one of you has added to the



stock of sin, by his own acts; let every man therefore for himself, implore forgiveness, and guidance by the Holy spirit, and the day of blessing will again smile. As the past year then has had its degree of judgment, do not, I intreat you, let it pass like a tale that is told, but let all lay it to heart and duly improve it.

Some of you have been called to mourn friends; some have been on the bed of sickness; adversity in various forms has assailed you, more or less. Oh why will ye then let your years pass as a tale that is told. All these are memento's of eternity, sent by Heaven to bid you awake from Satan's slumber; to open your blinded eyes, and in the pure light of the sun of righteousness, to perceive and enjoy that religion which came down from God, and which would fain lead you to him.

Thou whose barns are overflowing, whose flocks whiten your fields, whose beeves fatten at your stalls; thou who art surrounded with all the comforts which can be enjoyed, remember the Almighty has thus blessed thee that thou mightest be won by his kindness to turn unto him and acknowledge his authority over you.

Thou whose bonds have multiplied, whose merchandize has increased, and who now numberest more pounds in thy income than at the last New-Year, come, take up the song of thanksgiving, and be loud and constant in ascriptions of praise.

Thou, who hast gained within the last year some object of thy desire, a beloved companion, a wish'd for station, the applause of thy fellows, or some other desideratum, come unto the Lord, and pay the homage due to his name.

And thou who hast experienced some signal deliverance, who hast been preserved in time of extreme peril, or hast had thy life spared from extreme sickness; remember thou, of all others, hast cause to con-

secrate thyself as a monument of his special mercy to the service of thy Creator.

All of you who have enjoyed health and strength, have been blessed with comfortable provision for the wants of life, have sat under the sound of the gospel, lived in a land of Bibles and Churches, a land where he who runs may read his duty, think ye if you have spent the last year as a tale that is told, ye shall be permitted to spend another thus? Will not God either leave you like Ephraim to your irreversible destruction, or visit you with such judgments as shall bring you to a sense of your dependence on him, and your desert of punishment?

Thus has he already visited many of you, and if ye who have been afflicted do not turn unto him, ye are incorrigibly hardened.

Man of sorrow—Has he entered thy domestic circle, and taken from thee the wife of thy bosom, or the child of thy affections; one who was the sweetener of thy pilgrimage, the helper of thy way; or, one who like the flower of spring, began to blossom and breathe fragrance—beautiful to the eye and delightful to the heart—wilt thou spend thy year as a tale that is told? If thou dost, remember, the scimitar of death is again drawn; again he strides toward the sanctuary of thy joys, thy household. Haste—turn to the Lord before he again strike—for strike he shall, again and again, in some form or other; except indeed thou be given over by God thy Maker, to blindness of mind and the blackness of darkness forever.

Hast thou suffered in thy wealth; has the blasting and mildew of misfortune affected thy property; art thou reduced from affluence to the borders of poverty; dost thou lament prospects blasted, high hopes hurled to the ground?—thy year, it is hoped, has not passed as a tale



that is told. Thy judgment came for thy soul's good ; to tear thy affections from earth ; to fix thy view on Heaven ; to call thee from bondage to Satan ; to bid thee open thy eyes on the light of the blessed Gospel, and taste that freedom, with which Christ makes free. For this cause wast thou chastened, and wilt thou despise the hand of the Lord, and be inattentive to his monition ?

Has the Lord put forth his hand and touched thy bone and thy flesh ; has disease come upon thee and withered the rose from thy cheek, and the strength from thy sinews ; has thy fatness wasted from off thee, and art thou even now seeking for new vigor and animation ;—Why came the visitation ? It had an end, and to thee a most important one. Its aim was to excite thee to reflection ; to warn thee that death soon must arrive ; it came, as the grave's precursor, to tell thy soul the necessity of preparation ; to awake thy powers to seek after God, and all thy energies to strive hard for Heaven—If thou neglect this, thou mayest never have another.

How many die suddenly ; how many, like the flower of morn, awake fresh and animated, look forth on the sun in hope, and delight in the pleasure of the day ; how many thus awake, who, before night, are cold as the clods of the mountain's side, inanimate as the rocks of the mountain's brow. Hast thou not seen the lightning rive the oak, and has not the strong tower been laid low by the whirlwind ? Where then, oh man, is thy safety ? What power, greater than Omnipotence, can ensure continuance to thy life ? Who is he that can ascend above the stars, and mounting higher than the throne of Jehovah, stay his command, when he bids death launch his arrow against thee ? Seek to serve that Almighty one, then will he not cut thee down but to translate thee to fairer worlds and a serener sky.

Come let us ponder our end—Let us at this new land-mark in our progress stop, reflect—Where are we going—To Heaven—or to Hell!!!

Are we prepared for the joys of Heaven ; Can we endure the torments of the damned?

Mortal man, what is your state by nature?—Depraved is your imagination, with your foolish heart darkened—Exposed to the curse of the law—The wrath of God abiding on you. By practice you have increased the dangers of this state. Doubly are you now obnoxious to Divine vengeance. Where is your deliverance ? What is your salvation ? Jesus Christ, and him crucified. Have you embraced this hope ? Then are you safe—Have you not ? Time flies—Eternity rolls onward—Look yonder is its approaching billow—Black as gloom's intensity are the clouds that hover o'er it.—No light to cheer, no friend to comfort ;—no God to succor.—Still press you onward ! Still flows your march steady as the stream to the Ocean ! Halt—Who is that above you that calls out for you to stop ? 'Tis GOD ALMIGHTY— and will you go ! will you perish !—See the ghost of the departed year, even now beckoning you to obey the voice divine—Warning you not to plunge into destruction. It says— you have sinned me away ;—you have never ceased to provoke Omnipotence during my progress. Behold, does it say, Behold the black catalogue of carelessness and crime, I have to present—and whither does it point?—**TO THE BAR OF JUDGMENT!**

What then are the duties proper to the present day?—Repentance and reformation. On the bended knees of our souls let us approach the mercy seat of Jehovah. Casting aside every thought of self, every dependence on our own good works, let us with deep humility implore forgiveness, for the atonement of that divine Immanuel, who poured out his life a



sacrifice for us. Turn unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon you, and unto our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

You have tried the world; now try Heaven. You have consulted your own appetites, and worshipped your own lusts; now consult the oracles of the eternal, worship the Omnipotent one.

No more offer incense at the shrine of Satan; he is a hard master—nothing but buffetings and miseries will you ever receive from him;—nothing but blessings and bliss can you receive from our Immanuel.

Say ye our hearts love the world and the things of the world, and we cannot tear them away from earth? Happy are ye if ye say this;—Happy if thus ye are sensible of your weakness, for then only can ye be brought to look to the right source for strength. Are ye weak? 'Tis true—but remember what GOD has said, My grace is sufficient for thee—my strength is made perfect thro' weakness.

Come then to the fountain of strength—Come ask Omnipotence for aid and you shall receive it—Christ himself will be the captain of your salvation. The holy spirit will renovate your heart, and give you those desires and affections which are acceptable unto God.

Trust alone in your Heavenly Father; keep near his throne; Then shall temptation be no more a deadly enemy, nor your evil propensities an invincible foe—Clad in the sacred armor of the ever blessed Gospel, you shall come off more than conquerors, thro' Christ who has loved you.

Let this New-year be consecrated to the service of your Creator. Remember the great object of your existence is to glorify GOD, and that in proportion as ye are thus engaged, can ye be safe or happy. That man only is fit to die who aims at glorifying his maker in every thing—who

loves him supremely, and who looks on this world as no more than a pilgrimage to a better land.

Ye who during the past year, lived near to God, who have sincerely sought that spirit which was in Christ, who have proposed to yourselves the blessed Saviour as an example, and by faith and prayer strove day by day to imitate him—Happy are ye! What tho' trials have been your portion—They were but the chastenings of a Heavenly Father—What tho' clouds and darkness may have rested upon your earthly prospects, your faith has enabled you to look beyond, to where He, who is mighty to save, sits on his throne of mercy. Your internal corruptions have given you many a hard conflict, but thro' Jesus, the Captain of your salvation, you have been able to withstand them and fight manfully. Rejoice, another year of your trials, of your conflicts, of your spiritual warfare, has passed—you are another year nearer the eternal mansions. Redeem, then, the time that remains.—Enter upon this new season with redoubled diligence. Remember every new instance of mercy you receive, is a loud call on you to be faithful labourers in the vineyard of the Lord. It is but a short time you will be permitted to testify your love to him, and your concern for the souls of men, here below. See you not thousands perishing around you? See you not some who are your near relations, some who are your bosom friends, still in the gall of bitterness and bonds of iniquity? And will ye let them perish without an effort? No, ye cannot. Ye cannot, if ye are Christians, be lost in so much apathy. Wrestling Jacobs and prevailing Israels will ye become for their salvation. Night and day will ye plead at the throne of grace for them. What though thus you have wrestled and prayed for them for years, and there yet appears no hope—Remember “ye shall reap,



"Ye faint not." Praying breath is never spent in vain. Many, very many, are the instances of the prayers of Christians being answered, long after they lie down in the sepulchre. Then, enter on the New year with renewed ardor, with redoubled vigor. Then, if your Master shall call for you before the close of it, then will he say to you, "Well done good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

May all of you learn in time the unsatisfactory joys this earth so constantly presses upon your attention, and give your souls rest, by reposing on the arm of that Divine Almighty Saviour, who is willing and waiting to save every one of you, if ye will but seek his salvation.

In order more effectually to wish you a happy New-year, I desire of my Maker, and I entreat of you, that within this year, every one may seek, may ask, may knock.

Then, not only shall this year be happy to you, but your immortal souls shall find eternity for them, crowned with the highest abundance of celestial felicity.

---

*Extract of a letter from one young Lady to another.*

MY DEAR H—,

I had anticipated a letter from you, but disappointment has succeeded. I would now give you a proof that I wish to observe the golden rule, of doing as I would be done by, and also demonstrate, that affection will break thro' the forms of ceremony. And what subject shall I chuse as most agreeable to my dear \*\*\*\*\*? Shall I speak of those things an infidel world ridicules and scoffs at? Yes, my dear H, I rejoice to think, to you those things are valuable—you are willing to cast in your lot with the poor despised christians.

We have this assurance, that if we seek the blessing of our God, we shall obtain it thro' Him who died for us. Let us then seek earnestly and unremittingly an interest in Christ's atoning sacrifice, for there is no other name given whereby we can be saved. Is it not a sweet consoling doctrine, that salvation is not of works—for does not every day's experience teach us, that Heaven could never be obtained thro' our own righteousness.—Yes, my dear girl, the more we know of our corrupt nature, the more ready will we be to take up St. Paul's complaint—The good I would, that do I not, and the evil I would not, that do I. And tho' we may cry, O wretched creature that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death? Yet with that eminent Saint, may we, by the grace of God, be enabled to say I thank God thro' Jesus Christ who giveth us the victory. We have the Apostles and Prophets for examples, let us then take encouragement from what they suffered for Christ, and faint not at the trials we meet, for in due time we shall reap:—they are all momentary, when compared with the eternity of bliss that awaits the saint.

Is it not delightful to think we shall meet where sin and sorrow shall no more molest us—where we shall serve our Maker without the clogs of sin—Yes, H, we shall no more then be those imperfect creatures we now are. No—

"Arrayed in glorious light,  
Shall these vile bodies shine,  
And every feature, every face,  
Look heavenly and divine."

Let us examine ourselves and know our standing with Christ, if indeed we be his. Let us pray fervently that God would direct us in the way of truth, lest we fall into errors and deceive ourselves, crying peace, ere God has spoken peace. Let us be diligent, circumspect and watchful, lest the great "adversary of souls" should gain an advantage over us.—



H. pray often, pray humbly and fervently.  
 "Prayer makes the christian's armor bright,  
 And Satan trembles when he sees  
 The weakest saint upon his knees."

*From a friend below the Ridge.*

"The united energies of zealous Pastors have already received the smiles of Heaven. The wastes of Zion begin to blossom. The mouldering ruins of the Church, long the assylum of beasts and birds, where naught was heard but the neighing of the steed, or the plaintive notes of the swallow, now re-echo with the grand Te Deum of immortal souls. What a blissful sight—How heart cheering to the Christian! Angels themselves rejoice. Much has been done, yet much remains to do: The strong holds of Satan must be demolished.—Let their assailants be shielded with the Christian's armor; intrepid in the attack, and persevering in the warfare—they will fall.

"From the furnace of affliction we often learn true wisdom. While in the full tide of prosperity, in the beatitude of earthly enjoyments, we are apt to doze away our existence, as if our comforts were to last forever.—Wedded to the fleeting things of time, we forget that we are born for immortality. We live as though we were never to die!—Fatal nearsighted delusion—When the awful monitor every moment admonishes us, that we are but worms of the dust! But, alas! when the chastening rod of Providence is suspended over us and dissolves the dearest ties that enchain us to earth, then those visionary bubbles burst into nonentity, and leave an aching void, which nothing but religion can supply. It is then we see vanity inscribed most legibly upon all sublunary things, and, as beggars, come to our blessed JESUS, to seek the "one thing needful." The proper improvement of such dispensations, is not among the least of God's mercies. Yes, my friend, it is

the greatest of mercies, which sometimes wounds to heal—which lacerates the heart, rends the tenderest fibres of the sweetest union, nips the loveliest buds, culls the fairest flowers, and then, even in the paroxysm of grief, enables us to feel that "it is good that we have been afflicted."

#### HYMN.

GLORY to thee, ALMIGHTY KING!  
 For all the blessings from thee spring:  
 Raiment and food, but chiefly grace:  
 The light of thy reviving face.

Glory to thee, thy smiles provide  
 The morning and the evening tide;  
 Thy care protects by night and day,  
 In present and in absent ray.

Glory to thee—when dangers lower,  
 By thy unconquerable power  
 Safe as thy throne our souls are kept:  
 Scarce on our cheek a tear is wept.

Glory to thee—when Satan's art  
 Assails us with temptation's dart,  
 Thy shield omniscient saves from  
 harm—

Around us rests thy parent arm.

Glory to thee—when trials come  
 And scarce has hope within us room,  
 Thy spirit sweetly whispers peace,  
 And gives from fear a bright release.

Glory to thee—when friendship sleeps  
 In dust round which affection weeps,  
 Thou op'nest on our eager view  
 Mansions where friendship may renew.

Glory to thee, when sland'rous tongues  
 Our deed and our intention wrongs,  
 Thou dost declare that thou wilt give  
 Fame in eternity to live.

Glory to thee—thine eye beholds  
 The inmost motives of our souls;  
 Thou slander's cloud will tear away,  
 And give our heart's desires to-day.

Glory to thee—when mortals eye  
 With coldness as they pass us by,  
 Thine ear will listen to our thought;  
 By thee will bliss divine be wrought.

Glory to thee—in death's dark hour  
 Light from Thyself will round us pour,  
 By thee transported, we shall rise  
 To live and reign amid the skies.